

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3005

November 25, 2020

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chairwoman
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby, Chairwoman Lowey, Ranking Member Leahy and Ranking Member Granger:

As you work to finalize an appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2021, we respectfully ask you to retain the Udall Amendment language from the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2019 (Division B, Title VII, Sec. 750) that ensures that no funding is authorized for horse meat inspectors or inspections, which would prevent domestic horse slaughter plants from operating. The House Appropriations Agriculture Subcommittee included this language in its Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies bill that passed out of committee by voice vote and was subsequently passed by the House of Representatives (H.R. 7608, Division B, Title VII, Sec. 739).

Specifically, we ask that no funds be appropriated to pay the salaries or expenses of USDA personnel to inspect horses under section 3 of the Federal Meat Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 603); or to implement or enforce section 352.19 of title 9, Code of Federal Regulations. Beginning in Fiscal Year 2006 (FY06) with the inclusion of the defund language and in Fiscal Year 2008 (FY08) with the prohibition on user fees, Congress has prohibited the slaughter of horses through the annual Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies appropriations bill.

The slaughter of horses for human consumption is opposed by 80 percent of Americans for multiple reasons. In addition to the inherent cruelty associated with the practice, allowing horse slaughter operations to return to the United States poses very serious health and safety risks to the American public. Horses are not raised as food animals and are routinely given substances that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration prohibits in animals destined for human consumption.

Requiring USDA funds for the inspection of an unsafe product that Americans do not eat is fiscally irresponsible. In this time of continued budgetary constraints, USDA should not be required to fund unnecessary programs for an unwanted industry. The millions of dollars

necessary to conduct horse slaughter inspections will be diverted from inspections of food items that Americans consume and where it has recently become evident that more inspections may be necessary.

Moreover, the establishment of a domestic horse slaughter plant has the potential to threaten consumer confidence in American beef products. As a result of the 2013 European Union scandal in which horse meat was mislabeled as beef, frozen burger sales in the U.K. dropped by 43 percent in the month following the discovery of horsemeat, sales of frozen-meat dishes in France dropped by 30 percent, and sales of ready-made pasta dishes, frozen foods and meat sauces in Italy dropped by 30 percent. It is not difficult to imagine the devastating impact on the U.S. beef industry if a similar scandal were to happen in our country.

We appreciate your leadership during each appropriations cycle. As you work to finalize legislation for Fiscal Year 2021 appropriations, we respectfully request your review and inclusion of this language. If you have questions regarding this request, please do not hesitate to contact us or our staff (Rob Childers, Rob_Childers@menendez.senate.gov or Molly Ryan, Molly_Ryan@collins.senate.gov).

Sincerely,

/s/ Robert Menendez
Robert Menendez
United States Senator

/s/ Susan Collins
Susan Collins
United States Senator

/s/ Christopher S. Murphy
Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator

/s/ Tom Udall
Tom Udall
United States Senator

/s/ Cory A. Booker
Cory A. Booker
United States Senator

/s/ Jack Reed
Jack Reed
United States Senator

/s/ Thomas R. Carper
Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator

/s/ Jeanne Shaheen
Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

/s/ Bernard Sanders
Bernard Sanders
United States Senator

/s/ Dianne Feinstein
Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

/s/ Chris Van Hollen
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

/s/ Christopher A. Coons
Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator

/s/ Catherine Cortez Masto
Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator

/s/ Ron Wyden
Ron Wyden
United States Senator

/s/ Jacky Rosen
Jacky Rosen
United States Senator

/s/ Kirsten Gillibrand
Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

/s/ Richard Blumenthal
Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

/s/ Kirsten Gillibrand
Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator